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# Competitive Foods and Beverage Toolkit

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More information can be found at  
[www.HealthierGeneration.org/schools](http://www.HealthierGeneration.org/schools)

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## Competitive Foods and Beverage Toolkit

### Competitive Foods & Beverage Criteria at a Glance

BRONZE LEVEL AWARD	
301	All beverages for sale to students outside of the school meals program during the regular and extended school day meet or exceed the Alliance School Beverage Guidelines. This includes a la carte, vending, snack and other food carts, school store and fundraising.
SILVER LEVEL AWARD	
	Meets Bronze
302	All competitive foods for sale to students outside of the school meals program during the regular and extended school day meet or exceed the Alliance Competitive Foods Guidelines. This includes a la carte, vending, snack and other food carts, school store and fundraising.
303	School policies and practices support that all beverages and competitive foods served to students for school and classroom parties during the regular and extended school day meet or exceed the Alliance Guidelines. (Exception allowed for a total of two times per year.)
304	School policies and practices support that food is never used as a reward or reinforcement for students
GOLD LEVEL AWARD	
	Meets Silver
305	Food and beverages sold and served in the staff lounge and at school-sponsored staff functions meet at least the Alliance High School Beverage and Competitive Foods Guidelines
306	Sports drinks (and “other beverages” between 11-66 calories per 8 ounces) are not available in the school setting except when provided by the school for student athletes participating in sport programs involving vigorous activity of more than one hour
307	School policies and practices restrict branding and marketing to those competitive foods and beverages that meet the Alliance Guidelines
308	All entrees served as competitive foods (e.g., a la carte, school store, vending, snack cart) shall meet, at least, the Alliance School Meals criterion for a low fat lunch entrée: No more than 12 g total fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, zero trans fat and 480 mg sodium

### Rationale

Competitive foods and beverages are foods sold, often as individual items, outside of the federally reimbursable school meals program (National Breakfast and Lunch and After-School Snack). They are classified as “competitive” because they compete with the reimbursable meals for students’ money, interest and appetite. These foods and drinks are sold in vending machines, on the a la carte line, on snack and other food carts, in school stores, in snack bars and as fundraisers. Foods served to students (i.e., as rewards and during parties and celebrations) can also be viewed as competitive because they

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can impact the purchase or consumption of a reimbursable school meal which adheres to national nutrition standards.

Competitive foods and beverages are largely unregulated and often contribute high levels of fat, sugar, sodium and/or calories to children's diets. Studies have found that greater access to less nutritious foods and beverages at school is associated with an increased body mass index and a decreased intake of fruits, vegetables, milk and key vitamins and minerals. Implementing nutrition standards that are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans- such as the Alliance's age-appropriate Competitive Foods and School Beverage Guidelines- helps guide children's choices and provides consistent messages that school partners, including families and industry, can more easily support.

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act requires all schools that receive federal funds for school meals to establish local wellness policies that include nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students at school. The Alliance Guidelines help fill that role for thousands of schools across the country and forms the basis for state and district-level policies across the country.

The Healthy Schools Program Framework uses the Alliance Guidelines as the foundation of the criteria for Competitive Foods and also takes into account other avenues where unhealthy foods and beverages may be available to students such as during school parties and through the use of food as a reward. Additionally, the criteria recognize the influence of branding, marketing and adult role modeling on students' food choices and on creating a healthier eating environment at school.

[Alliance Competitive Foods and Beverage Web page](#)

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<b>301</b>	All beverages for sale to students outside of the school meals program during the regular and extended school day meet or exceed the Alliance School Beverage Guidelines. This includes a la carte, vending, snack and other food carts, school store and fundraising.
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### Rationale

Over the past 30 years, children and adolescents in the United States have steadily increased their consumption of calories through beverages, especially sugar-sweetened beverages. Reducing calories from beverages while encouraging replacement with plain water and more nutrient-dense, controlled portions of lower fat milk and 100% juice, contributes to improved nutrition and potentially lower rates of childhood overweight and obesity.

In 2006, the Alliance [School Beverage Guidelines](#) were developed in conjunction with nutrition experts at the American Heart Association. These science-based and age-appropriate guidelines cover beverages offered for sale to students during the regular and extended school day outside of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) federally reimbursable school meals program (i.e., School Breakfast, National School Lunch and After School Snack). These beverages include those sold in school vending machines, school stores, a la carte lines, snack and other food carts and as fundraisers. They include any beverage sold as an individual item even if also available through the school meal, such as a milk or juice. (See the Guidelines for specific standards, as well as when they apply.)

To encourage industry's role in the childhood obesity solution, the Alliance established a voluntary agreement with the American Beverage Association, Dr Pepper Snapple Group (originally Cadbury-Schweppes), the Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo, Inc. to implement the Alliance Guidelines in schools throughout the country. The Alliance receives no financial gain for this agreement. After the initial three-year implementation phase, a third-party analysis identified an 88 percent decrease in total beverage calories shipped to schools and a drop in overall volume of full-calorie carbonated soft drinks shipped by 95 percent.

Applying the Guidelines to all venues where competitive beverages are sold to students during the regular and extended school day decreases the availability of less nutritious and higher calorie beverages for children and adolescents and urges students to select lower-calorie, more nutrient dense beverages.

### Action Steps

- Identify all the places in a school where beverages are sold to students and determine the corresponding department, administrator, other staff members or student/parent group who is responsible for each venue. (Use the Alliance [School Beverage Inventory](#) to determine beverages sold.)
- Build consensus: Bring together the adults and students responsible for each venue and develop plans for strategically changing the beverages in the school. Consider adopting the Alliance [School Beverage Guidelines](#) as policy or best practice and explore the nutritional rationale for the specific beverage categories using the Alliance [School Beverage Rationale and Working with Vendors](#). View compliant products on the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#).
- Engage the school or district business officer to identify any contracts for amendment and work with the appropriate vendor to change the beverages currently sold to students at the school.
- Have a conversation with your vendor to discuss your interest in finding replacement products. (It behooves the vendor to work with you and keep your business. As part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, the USDA is developing national competitive foods and beverage standards. Sometime around 2013, vendors will need to sell healthier food and drink choices in order to continue to serve schools. Vendors that are already shifting their offerings to healthier options will be more ready to meet the national requirements in 2013.) Ask the vendor for sample products to

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use with student taste tests.

- Share plans broadly and encourage input. Include student, parent and staff representatives as they can provide important perspective and feedback. They can also help speed adoption and implementation, as well as enforce policy.
- Students can be great catalysts for change. Educate students about competitive foods. Use taste tests to engage them in selecting replacement products. Explore student mobilization opportunities with the Alliance empowerME@school tools. Students can also conduct a social marketing campaign to promote the benefits of healthier beverages.
- Price the new, healthier choices the same or lower than less healthy options and offer promotional strategies, such as frequent buyer discounts and contests.
- Replace unhealthy beverage fundraisers with non-beverage options or sell beverages that meet the Alliance School Beverage Guidelines.
- Promote successes, such as the lowering of calories consumed, increase in water intake and positive testimonials from students who welcome the healthier choices.
- Use the [Competitive Foods and Beverages Frequently Asked Questions](#) to learn more about both the School Beverage and Competitive Foods Guidelines as they relate to implementation.

## Recognition Documentation

Complete and upload the *Alliance School Beverage Inventory*. Complete the description (brand, product name, flavor/type and size) of **all** beverages sold. Include the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) identification of products or product labels.

*NOTE:* In the rare event that your school does not sell a single beverage to a student (not even juice, water or milk), a letter verifying this claim can be uploaded in lieu of the *Alliance School Beverage Inventory*. This letter must be written by the school principal and include his/her original signature on school letterhead.

## Resources

- [School Beverage Guidelines](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [School Beverage Inventory](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [School Beverage Rationale and FAQ](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about the Alliance Guidelines](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Letter to Beverage Vendor](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Administrator Support Letter for Comp Foods & Bev](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Care2Eat: Lessons for a Lifetime of Healthy Eating](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation) and [web site](#)
- empowerME@school Student Toolkit & Facilitator Guide (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
  - [Student Toolkit \(Color\)](#) Also available in [Black and White](#)
  - [Facilitator Guide](#)

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- [Taste Testing New Foods](#) (Vermont FEED)
- [Healthy Snack: Social Marketing Campaign Guide](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Alternative Fundraising Ideas](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [A+ Fundraisers for High School](#) (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)
- [Yes You Can: A Fresh Look at Healthy Fundraisers](#) (New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)

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<b>302</b>	All competitive foods for sale to students outside of the school meals program during the regular and extended school day meet the Alliance Competitive Foods Guidelines. This includes a la carte, vending, snack and other food carts, school store and fundraising.
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### Rationale

Similar to the voluntary guidelines for beverages, in 2006, the Alliance [Competitive Foods Guidelines](#) were developed in conjunction with nutrition experts at the American Heart Association. These science-based and age-appropriate guidelines promote nutrient-rich foods, fat-free and low-fat dairy products and place limits on calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium. The Guidelines cover snacks, treats, desserts and side items offered for sale to students during the school and extended school day outside of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) federally reimbursable school meals program (i.e., School Breakfast, National School Lunch and After School Snack). Competitive foods are sold in school vending machines, school stores, a la carte lines, snack and other food carts and as fundraisers. (See the Guidelines for specific standards, as well as when they apply.)

The Alliance brokered a voluntary agreement with leading food manufacturers to engage industry as part of the childhood obesity prevention solution. The Alliance does not receive any financial gain from this agreement. Instead each company commits to work with the Alliance to encourage acceptance of the Guidelines by distributors and schools and, where appropriate, to develop or change competitive foods offered for sale in schools to meet the Guidelines.

The question of financial stability in schools is often applied to competitive foods as they are generally considered a source for discretionary funds. Plus concerns about revenue loss can arise when considering a switch to healthier options. In actuality, there is a growing body of evidence that suggests schools implementing strong nutrition standards can in fact maintain financial stability. Few data sources exist to substantiate the claim that changes in standards lead to a loss in total revenue. In some instances, increased participation in the National School Lunch Program helps offset implementation dips in sales of competitive foods. Research also reveals that the school meals program may actually subsidize competitive foods. Additionally, there are numerous examples of schools generating revenue by conducting profitable fundraisers that do not rely on the sale of unhealthy foods. Alternative practices in fundraising are not only proving profitable, they are also being recognized as value-add for engaging students in more meaningful ways, building improved relationships between the school and families, involving community resources and better aligning fundraising and educational goals.

### Action Steps

- Identify all the places in a school where competitive foods are sold to students and determine the corresponding department, administrator, other staff members or student/parent group who is responsible for each venue. (Use the Alliance [Competitive Foods Inventory](#) to determine items sold.)
- Build consensus: Bring together the adults and students responsible for each venue and develop plans for strategically changing the competitive foods in the school. Examples include making the change over the summer all at once or making the change gradually over the course of the year by adding healthier products at a less expensive price and increasing the price of the less healthy products.
- Consider adopting the Alliance [Competitive Foods Guidelines](#) as policy or best practice.
- Use online tools to locate and select compliant products. View products that meet the Guidelines on the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) or use the [Product Calculator](#) to determine the compliancy of products. Consider involving students in this process as they have been known to enjoy using the online tools while improving their nutrition literacy.

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- Work directly with vendors. Companies are more likely to respond to the demands from their customers than from a third-party organization like the Alliance. Companies do not want to lose customers, especially in this economy, and they will often offer and create services and products that meet their customers' needs. Sometimes vendors may need to be educated and informed. Some suggested steps to take:
  - Talk to neighboring schools and districts to learn how they work with vendors. Offer to join efforts in working with vendors to demonstrate a higher demand for healthier products that meet the Alliance Guidelines.
  - Hold a meeting with vendor(s) to discuss changing the assortment of foods offered to meet the Alliance Guidelines.
  - Provide a copy of the Guidelines and show vendors the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) and [Product Calculator](#).
  - Ask the vendor to present a list of products that meet the Guidelines.
  - Request product samples to use in taste tests with students.
- Share plans broadly and encourage input. Include student and faculty representatives as they can provide important feedback and speed adoption and implementation. Students can be great catalysts for change. Explore student mobilization opportunities with the Alliance empowerME@school tools. Students can also conduct a social marketing campaign to promote the benefits of healthy eating.
- Conduct taste tests of compliant competitive foods and/or offer promotional and pricing options that favor healthier choices.
- Replace unhealthy food fundraisers with non-food options or sell food that meets the Alliance Competitive Foods Guidelines.
- Promote successes, such as the lowering of calories consumed and positive testimonials from students who welcome the healthier choices.
- Use the [Competitive Foods and Beverages Frequently Asked Questions](#) to learn more about both the School Beverage and Competitive Foods Guidelines as they relate to implementation.

## Recognition Documentation

Complete and attach the *Alliance Competitive Foods Inventory*. Complete the description (brand, product name, flavor/type and size) of **all** competitive foods sold. Include the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) identification of products, printouts from the [Product Calculator](#) or product labels.

*NOTE:* In the rare event that your school does not sell a single, individual food item to a student (not even yogurt or fruit), a letter verifying this claim can be uploaded in lieu of the *Alliance Competitive Foods Inventory*. This letter must be written by the school principal and include his/her original signature on school letterhead.

## Resources

- [Competitive Food Guidelines](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Competitive Foods Inventory](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Calculator](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about the Alliance Guidelines](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)



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- [Administrator Support Letter for Comp Foods & Bev](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Alliance Letter to HSP Supporter](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Snack: Social Marketing Campaign Guide](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- empowerME@school Student Toolkit & Facilitator Guide (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
  - [Student Toolkit \(Color\)](#) *Also available in [Black and White](#)*
  - [Facilitator Guide](#)

## Competitive Foods and Beverage Toolkit

<b>303</b>	School policies and practices support that all beverages and competitive foods served to students for school and classroom parties (including birthday parties) during the regular and extended school day meet or exceed the Alliance Guidelines. (Exception allowed for a total of two times per year.)
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### Rationale

To provide consistent messaging, the whole school environment must be considered. A school that promotes low fat and low sugar foods in the cafeteria while allowing for regular exposure to high fat and high sugar during school parties gives students conflicting messages. There are a variety of ways to celebrate holidays or birthdays while promoting healthy choices. The exception provided with this criterion - of a maximum of two times a year - demonstrates that occasional deviation from more nutrient dense foods is acceptable practice. It also helps to promote the concept that less healthy foods are treats and, as such, are consumed at select times, not as a daily or regular occurrence.

With school wellness policies and nutrition standards changing the foods allowed in the school environment, there are increasing opportunities to create new traditions to celebrate the seasons, birthdays and special days throughout the year. Many holidays, celebrations and parties have come to focus on food. Newer traditions can encourage more opportunities for play and time to enjoy music, dance, games, sports and other fun activities.

### Action Steps

- Write a policy statement or add appropriate language to the district or school wellness policy regarding school celebrations and parties. Consider using the criterion 303 as a policy statement.
- Provide a parent letter at the beginning of the school year explaining the school's practice of conducting celebrations—including class and birthday parties—with foods and beverages that meet the Alliance Guidelines. Consider sharing the website of the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) to provide a catalogue of beverages, snacks and treats that meet the Guidelines. (Make sure your whole staff is apprised of this letter.)
- Promote the “healthy celebration” program via the school's website, in newsletters, on bulletin boards, during wellness fairs and possibly through a marketing campaign.
- Encourage staff to celebrate children's birthdays in a variety of ways. Consider offering a menu of options that can include special privileges, providing small non-food trinkets or participation in some fun physical activity or game. See the resources for collections of ideas.

### Recognition Documentation

Provide a copy of the policy, a policy statement or relevant letters to school staff, parents/families or students that explain how school and classroom parties (including birthday parties) must align with the Alliance Guidelines.

OR

Describe how school and classroom parties and celebrations – including birthday parties - are specifically aligned to the Alliance School Beverage and Competitive Foods Guidelines. Your response must include reference to the Guidelines, how compliancy of products is determined and how parents, teachers and students are notified of celebrations/party practices. If you refer to a list of foods/beverages, letters to parents or postings in newsletters or on school web sites, upload this document or provide web site URL. Write a minimum of five sentences.

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### Resources

- [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Calculator](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Sample Parent Letter Regarding Classroom Party Policy](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Birthday Celebrations Menu of Ideas](#) (Rosa Parks Edison Elementary School)
- [Healthy Celebrations – Promoting a Healthy School Environment](#) (Connecticut State Department of Education)

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<b>304</b>	School policies and practices support that food is never used as a reward or reinforcement for students
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### Rationale

Using food to reward success (such as a pizza party provided for an accomplishment) or reinforce good behavior (such as a piece of candy, or even a piece of fruit) is often regular practice in a school setting. Providing food based on performance or behavior creates a potential lifelong habit foundation of associating food with personal achievement– or lack thereof. This can lead to eating foods outside of meal or snack times even when a person is not hungry. Food, even nutrient dense foods, if used for reward and/or reinforcement, can become a more constant presence in one’s life which can contribute to obesity and the development of unhealthful eating behaviors. Rewarding a child is intended to help the child adopt positive behaviors that become internalized and self-regulating without the need for external prompting or recognition. Providing privileges and similar types of reward can help build self-efficacy and other personal and social skills. Some low-cost rewards, such as jump ropes and balls, can also help build healthful habits.

### Action Steps

- Write a policy statement or add appropriate language to the district or school wellness policy that prohibits the use of food as a reward or behavioral reinforcement. Consider using criterion 304 as a policy statement.
- Survey staff to determine alternative practices already employed to reward students outside of the use of food (consider surveying staff to determine the current frequency of using food as a reward and/or reinforcement).
- Work with the school wellness council and administrators to determine alternative practices for reward and reinforcement and send a letter to staff that explains the school’s new practices with a list of approved options.
- Promote the new “reward and reinforcement program” via the school’s website, in newsletters and on bulletin boards.
- Share success stories at staff meetings.
- Post recognition signs (e.g., student of the week award) in visible places in the school.

### Recognition Documentation

Provide a copy of the policy, a policy statement or relevant letters to school staff, parents/families or students that articulate that food is never used as a reward or reinforcement.

OR

Describe how policies and practices, including consistent school-wide messaging, enforce that food is never used as a reward or reinforcement throughout the school, including every classroom. . Your response must include what rewards are being used and for what circumstances and how parents, teachers and students are notified of reward practices. If you refer to a list of appropriate awards, letters to parents or postings in newsletters or on school web sites, upload this document or provide web site URL. Write a minimum of five sentences.

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### **Resources**

- [Constructive Classroom Rewards](#) (Center for Science in the Public Interest)
- [You Did It! How to Reward and Motivate Kids without Using Foods](#) (Utah Department of Health)

## Competitive Foods and Beverage Toolkit

<b>305</b>	Food and beverages sold and served in the staff lounge and at school-sponsored staff functions meet at least the Alliance High School Beverage and Competitive Foods Guidelines
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### Rationale

Healthy employees are more productive employees and healthy employees are tremendous role models for students. Districts with school employee wellness programs have also found that a focus on health promotion attracts new employees and earns the loyalty of current ones. Moreover, school employees interested in their own health are more likely to take an interest in the health of their students; students, in turn, are more likely to engage in health-promoting activities when adults model such behaviors. By following the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Competitive Foods and School Beverage Guidelines for high schools, faculty and staff not only improve their own health but set a good example for students.

### Action Steps

- Identify the school staff responsible for vending in the staff lounge, if applicable.
- Share the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Competitive Foods and School Beverage Guidelines for high schools with all persons responsible for bringing/selling food in the staff lounge and at school-sponsored staff functions.
- To identify snack foods and beverages that meet the Alliance Guidelines:
  - Use the [Staff Beverage and Snack Foods Vending Inventory](#) to determine what products are currently available for sale.
  - Use the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) to find compliant snack foods that meet the Guidelines
  - Use the [Product Calculator](#) to determine if items not found on the Healthy Schools Product Navigator® meet the Guidelines. (NOTE: Currently, this only applies to foods not beverages.)
  - Provide the catalogue of products from the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) and a list of other compliant snack items identified with the [Product Calculator](#) to each person responsible for vending in staff lounges and staff meetings.
- Share the *Letter to Beverage Vendor* from the Alliance to help inform vendor(s), if applicable.
- Create a policy that establishes the Alliance Guidelines as the standards for food and beverages sold and served in the staff lounge and at school-sponsored staff functions. Include processes for monitoring and enforcing the policy. Consider using criterion 305 as a policy statement.

### Recognition Documentation

Provide two or more photographs of each staff lounge vending machine (with all products clearly identifiable) or complete the *Staff Beverage and Snack Foods Vending Inventory*.

### AND

Describe how foods and beverages served at school faculty/staff functions meet the Alliance Competitive Foods and School Beverage Guidelines for high schools. Include a description of foods and beverages typically served and messaging that enforces the serving of only compliant items. Write a minimum of six sentences. One to two additional photographs of food served at staff functions are appreciated.

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### **Resources**

- [Staff Beverage and Snack Foods Vending Inventory](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Calculator](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings](#) (University of Minnesota)

## Competitive Foods and Beverage Toolkit

<b>306</b>	Sports drinks (and “other beverages” between 11-66 calories per 8 ounces) are not available in the school setting except when provided by the school for student athletes participating in sport programs involving vigorous activity of more than one hour
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### Rationale

Sports drinks are considered sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) designed originally for use by athletes to rehydrate and restore electrolytes, carbohydrates, potassium and other nutrients, after a vigorous workout. Increased consumption of SSBs is linked to diabetes, coronary heart disease and excess weight gain. Removing sports drinks at the Gold level aligns with advice of leading nutrition and childhood health experts, such as the American Heart Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, to limit the use of such beverages. (The Alliance School Beverage Guidelines do not approve sports drinks for elementary and middle school students at any time.)

In addition to the sugar that this category of beverages adds, it also displaces milk, juice and water; the healthier beverages for all grade levels.

### Action Steps

- Consider adopting a “no sports drinks” clause for the wellness policy or use the policy to limit sports drinks to athletes after a vigorous workout of one hour or more. Even without a specific policy, schools can change the practice of selling sports drinks as well as other sugar-sweetened beverages with 11 calories or more per 8 ounces.
- Identify all the places in a school where these beverages are sold to students and determine the corresponding department, administrator, other staff members, or student/parent group who is responsible for each venue. (Use the Alliance [School Beverage Inventory](#) to determine beverages sold.)
- Build consensus: Bring together the adults and students responsible for each venue and develop plans for strategically replacing these beverages in the school. With milk, water, juice and no or low calorie beverages (0-10 calories for 8 ounces), there is ample choice for substitution. View options on the [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#).
- Have a conversation with your vendor to discuss your interest in finding replacement products. (It behooves the vendor to work with you and to keep your business. As part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, the USDA is developing national competitive foods and beverage standards. In 2013, vendors will need to sell healthier food and drink choices in order to continue to serve schools. Vendors that are already shifting their offerings to healthier options will be more ready to meet the national requirements.) Ask the vendor for sample products to use with student taste tests.
- Students can be great catalysts for change. Use taste tests to engage them in selecting replacement products. Explore student mobilization opportunities with the Alliance empowerME@school tools. Students can also conduct a social marketing campaign to promote the benefits of healthier beverages.
- Offer promotional and pricing options that favor more nutrient-dense and/or lower calorie beverage choices, such as frequent buyer discounts and water consumption contests.
- Replace fundraisers that use sports drinks and other sugar sweetened beverages with non-beverage options or sell beverages that otherwise meet the Alliance School Beverage Guidelines.
- Promote successes, such as the lowering of calories and increase in water consumption.



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### **Recognition Documentation**

Provide a copy of the beverage and/or sports drinks policy, a policy statement or relevant letters to school staff, parents/families or students that describe limiting this class of beverages for all students except for athletes participating in sport programs involving vigorous activity of more than one hour.

OR

Describe where and when sports drinks (and “other beverages”) are allowed for students on the school campus. Include types of beverages, hours available and the venues where they can be found. Write a minimum of three sentences.

### **Resources**

- [School Beverage Inventory](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Sports Drinks Fact Sheet](#) (Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity)

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<b>307</b>	School policies and practices restrict branding and marketing to those competitive foods and beverages that meet the Alliance Guidelines
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### Rationale

A 2005 report by the Institute of Medicine, *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity*, provides a comprehensive review of the scientific evidence on the influence of food marketing on diets and diet-related health of children and youth. The study requested by Congress and sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, finds that current food and beverage marketing practices puts children's long-term health at risk. Food advertising targeted at children is not stringently regulated by the United States government. The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), funded by the advertising industry, provides voluntary third-party oversight as an alternative to government control. The American Heart Association supports legislation and regulation that addresses efforts to limit the marketing and advertising of low nutrient, high-calorie foods and beverages to children.

Some schools have already taken measures to protect students from exposure to commercial advertising practices, helping to ensure that the school environment meets educational needs and not commercial motives. For example, the San Francisco Unified School District's Board of Education passed the "Commercial-Free Schools Act." This Gold level criterion affirms the impact that food and beverage marketing, including branding, has on the dietary patterns and health status of American children. Branding is the practice of using a company's name or logo to create product brand recognition and to influence purchasing. This criterion does not suggest banishment of all branding and marketing; instead it limits these practices to only those healthier products that meet the Alliance Guidelines.

Marketing and branding can occur without the sale of products. For example, companies provide large items w/ branding such as scoreboards and smaller items such as book covers. Even Web sites and "educational" games can be branded. It is recommended that schools recognize the myriad of ways that students are exposed to brand and product marketing and place limits on all venues of exposure.

### Action Steps

- Write a policy statement or add appropriate language to the district or school wellness policy regarding marketing and branding. Consider using criterion 307 as a policy statement.
- Survey the school for the types and locations of commercial branding—look for logos, company or product names or slogans and mascots or recognizable characters on posters, vending machine fronts, book covers, etc. Even explore the websites that students use.
- Meet with the school wellness council to address the concepts that schools should limit branding and restrict marketing to only those foods that meet the Alliance School Beverage Guidelines.
- Adopt a policy that requires commercial materials to undergo review procedures and meet the same standards as other materials placed in the educational setting. For example, curricular materials are reviewed in advanced and need to meet certain criteria. Materials with commercial intent should go through a similar process before being placed in the school environment.
- In order to move away from the practice of receiving funds for commercial exposure to branding and marketing practices, (e.g., branded score boards), identify and pursue noncommercial partnerships with businesses to finance education and/or implement healthy practices in fundraising. For example, some schools partner with their health insurance provider to offer incentive funds for preventative care. Such funds can sometimes be used to support a school's discretionary spending.

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- Educate children about the influences of advertising through media literacy, helping students to critically analyze messaging.
- Educate parents to reinforce children's evaluation of commercial content in all media to which they are exposed.
- Evaluate policies and business partnerships to enforce the fulfillment of educational versus commercial needs.

### **Recognition Documentation**

Provide a copy of the policy, a policy statement or relevant letters to vendors, school staff, parents/families or students that restrict branding and marketing practices to only those products that meet the Guidelines.

OR

Describe how competitive foods and beverage branding and marketing are restricted. In your response, keep in mind that marketing can occur via a variety of venues including online games (even educational ones), web sites, book covers and other student-oriented materials. Write a minimum of four sentences.

### **Resources**

- [Food Advertising and Marketing to Children](#) (American Heart Association)
- [Food and Beverage Marketing in California](#) (Public Health Institute)

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<b>308</b>	All entrees served as competitive foods (e.g., a la carte, school store, vending, snack cart) shall meet, at least, the Alliance School Meals criterion for a low fat lunch entrée: No more than 12 g total fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, zero trans fat and 480 mg sodium
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## Rationale

As schools improve the nutritional value of entrée choices for school meals, it is important to apply similar standards to entrées served as competitive foods. Otherwise, business may be driven away from school meals participation as students may be drawn to the less healthy options. Having different standards for entrées in the school meals and a la carte lines creates an atmosphere of discrimination as students from lower income households are less able to purchase the a la carte choices. Similar products, such as pizza, compete with each other and it becomes obvious as to who is served a school meal and who can afford the a la carte option (often provided by a known commercial vendor).

Also, as students become more health conscious and take charge of their own health behaviors, there is a greater demand for lower calorie entrée choices, including vegetarian and vegan offerings at school.

## Action Steps

- Move beyond the traditional pizza, burgers and chicken patties to include leaner options such as tuna or other fish, grilled chicken and non-meat selections such as bean-oriented dishes like vegetarian chili.
- Provide opportunities for students to taste new foods before putting them on the menu.
- Review menus to verify that a low fat entrée that meets the Alliance criteria (no more than 12 g total fat, 4.5 g saturated fat, zero trans fat and 48 mg sodium) is offered daily at lunch for the entire eight weeks of menus submitted.
- Use product labels, recipe nutrition information, nutrition analysis software or the Nutrition Analysis Tool to obtain nutrition values.

## Recognition Documentation

Complete the chart for five competitive food entrées: Total fat grams, saturated fat grams, trans fat grams and sodium in milligrams. For entrees with multiple components (e.g. yogurt/muffin/string cheese) provide this information for each component and for the entire entrée. Salad entrées must include salad dressing in the total.

[illegible]

## **Competitive Foods and Beverage Toolkit**

### **Resources**

- [Iowa Low Fat Entrees](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Healthy Schools Product Navigator®](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation)
- [Nutrition Analysis Tool \(NAT\)](#) (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)